**Culture and incivility at the intersections of class, and gender:**

**Examining the experiences of South Korean female janitors**

Yay-hyung Cho

Ramaswami Mahalingam

**Abstract**

This research examines the impact of workplace incivility (e.g., disrespect, condescension, degradation) on the occupational and psychological well-being of female Korean janitors. We tested the mediation effect of workplace incivility in a sample of 160 janitors, finding that perceptions of incivility in the workplace mediated effects of job burnout on turnover intentions as well as effects of work-home conflict on depression. Our research not only examines the significance of workplace incivility across cultures, but also examines the meaning and role of incivility in the context of “dirty work”. Specifically, we identified culture specific form of incivility*, mushi* that is embedded in the working-class experience of being a janitor at the intersections of gender and social class. Implications for organizational science and practices are discussed.

**Keywords**: *incivility, janitors, work-home conflict, dirty work, South Korea*

**Culture and incivility at the intersections of class, and gender:**

**Examining the experiences of Korean janitors**

It is generally recognized that interpersonal mistreatment, such as harassment, injustice, and bullying in the workplace, has negative impacts on victims (Griffin, O’Leary-Kelly, & Collins, 1998; Leather, Brady, Lawrence, Beale, & Cox, 1999). While the detrimental effects of direct aggression have received much attention from both public and academic audiences for a few decades, until recent years less effort has been made to investigate the effect of the milder and more ambiguous form of interpersonal workplace mistreatment called “incivility” (Andersson & Pearson,1999; Schilpzand et al., 2016). Lately, considerable effort has been spent to unearth the psychological, physical, and organizational damage caused by workplace incivility (e.g., Griffin & Lopez, 2005; Kern & Grandey, 2009). However, little research has explored the impact of incivility in a workplace with East Asian cultural norms, such as hierarchical workplace culture and overt gender bias in marginalized occupations, such as janitors.

In this research, we examine workplace incivility among Korean janitors, who are marginally positioned at the intersection of culture, class, and gender. We also consider the role incivility plays in shaping the relationships among various workplace outcomes. We provide a more nuanced exploration of the relationship between incivility and job burnout, turnover intentions, work- family conflict and depression.

**Working Culture and Conditions in South Korea**

Several unique cultural factors in the South Korean workplace context make it a meaningful addition to the workplace incivility literature. First, workplace incivility is a highly prevalent and potent phenomenon in South Korean organizations (Kernan et al., 2011). Several researchers have pointed out that traditional Confucian Korean culture has facilitated top-down authoritarian styles of leadership (Kim et al., 2004; Kim & Kim, 2007). Such a hierarchical and authoritarian workplace culture might have exacerbated and normalized interpersonal abuse inside the workplace; a host of studies indicate a link between authoritarian leadership and workplace bullying (Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad,2007; Hoel et al., 2010; Tomey, 2009). Despite improvements in working conditions in the 80s and early 90s in addition to the Westernization of the labor force, a hierarchical working culture still remains. Korean cultural values and practices -- which favor authoritarianism, collectivism, regionalism, and kinship ties -- are starkly different from the horizontal organization and rationalism characteristic of Western infrastructure (Chang et al., 2005).

The aforementioned hardships of working in South Korea are even more intense for those involved in labor-based, low-status, physical jobs. An important feature of Korean industrial relations is the sharp separation of manual and non-manual work (Koo, 2001). Although this separation exists in all societies, in Korea the status distinction between physical laborers and office workers has been much sharper than in most other industrial societies, even in comparison with other East Asian nations that share the same Confucian tradition. Koo argues that Korean manual workers had an additional source of oppression due to South Korea's unique political situation to put extreme emphasis on the productivity of the workers while ignoring their fundamental rights and an implicit cultural assumption that manual work lacks dignity which is also reflected in the huge wage disparities between manual and non-manual work.

Such large discrimination in wages against blue-collar workers in Korea reflects a deeply contemptuous societal attitude toward manual work. Such workers are considered to be low status, “dirty”, and unrespectable (Koo, 2001; Kim, 2010). An interview with one of the janitors from Chosun University provides a glimpse of the dehumanizing working conditions for manual workers:

*It’s not that I don’t exist just because I am invisible to people.*

*I just wish people can dream a better life, no matter where they work.*

*The bare minimum working condition should not be just about the amount of money.*

*It’s about being treated as a human being*

*Park Sang Jin (Janitor at Chosun University, 2016, The Scoop Magazine)*

Gender discrimination is another significant and unfortunate characteristic of Korean labor culture (Kim and Finch, 2002; Hwang 2003). Even when the discrimination against women in the workplace is declining, the remnants of Confucian values (Chin et al., 2011) still emphasize women’s role as homemakers. Thus, the majority of educated Korean women are economically inactive (Cho et al., 2010). This gender gap is worsened by the difficulties women face re-entering the labor force after marriage, childbirth, or childcare.

While most of the incivility research is conducted in Europe and North America, several researchers studied the workplace incivility in the South Korean context. Rhee et al., 2017, for example, explored the relationship between the perception of incivility and job performance of 450 Hotel employees, finding that these two variables were negatively related. Also, the workplace incivility has been widely explored in South Korea, especially among Korean nurses (Kim et al., 2013; Hong et al., 2016). These researchers found a strong positive correlation between the perception of incivility and the job burnout. However, these researchers did not explore culture-specific aspects of incivility.

By investigating the experience of South Korean female janitors, this study extends the literature on workplace incivility in four significant ways. First, we are examining workplace incivility from a cultural psychological perspective. How does incivility in the workplace unfold in cultures where incivility based on class or gender is considered “normal”? Second, our participants are mostly older -- in their 50’s and 60’s -- and studying workplace incivility among this age group is especially meaningful because of the position this generation is situated in. They are called the “sandwich generation” (Miller, 1981; Remennick, 1999) due to the responsibilities they hold in financially supporting both their children and their parents. Under more pressure to sustain their careers, while also doing the bulk of caring for the elderly at home, how would this generation perceive workplace incivility and what would the impact of workplace incivility be on their lives inside and outside of the workplace? Third, this study provides a meaningful addition to the “dirty work” literature, which has primarily employed qualitative studies to investigate the meaning and impact of workplace stereotypes or workplace aggression. Workplace incivility, which is a subtle and ambiguous form of interpersonal aggression (Lim et al., 2008), has not been the focus of research on “dirty work”. The current research would also be the first to use a quantitative method in the “dirty work” literature (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Simpson, Slutskaya, Lewis, & Höpfl, 2012). Finally, this research is also the first to investigate the impact and meaning of daily incivility for “dirty workers”. The existing incivility literature, in fact, focuses primarily on educated middle class employees residing in the United States. The workplace incivility experiences of “dirty workers” may be different from those of middle-class employees because of the stigma associated with their profession; we address these issues in the current study. We specifically explore the culture-specific construal of incivility that is embedded within the cultural context. In the following sections, we review the work on dirty work, incivility, work-family conflict, depression, job burnout, and intention to quit.

“**Dirty Work” and Incivility**

“Dirty work” refers to occupations that are stigmatized as “dirty”, “polluted” or “degrading” (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Hughes, 1951, 1958; Simpson, Slutskaya, Lewis, & Höpfl, 2012) due to their association with “taintedness”. Although all “dirty work” shares some common threads, “dirty” jobs are far from identical. Ashforth and Kreiner (2014) have argued that since “dirty work” is socially constructed, we need to take into account the role of cultural, historical, and demographic contexts. Although “dirty work” researchers have expressed interest in the question of whether the stigma of dirty work operates similarly across cultures (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2014), such studies are rare. To address this gap, the current research takes into account both cultural (South Korea) and demographic (female) contexts when investigating workplace incivility among female South Korean janitors.

In the South Korean context, “dirty work” (e.g., janitorial work) is often associated with the group of people who were unable to obtain other jobs (Khang, 2005). Furthermore, the proximity to dirt and pollution produces stigmatizing conditions such that the workers associated with these professions become “tainted” or stigmatized and are denied social acceptance (Dutton, Debebe & Wrzesniewski, 2016; Goffman, 1968; Wrzesniewski, Dutton & Debebe, 2016). Most of the “dirty work” literature, however, focuses on how workers from a “tainted” occupation derive positive meaning from their work (Simpson et al., 2014; Slutskaya et al., 2012) and maintain positive identity (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Ashforth et al., 2007). By contrast, the effect of workplace incivility on the well-being of “dirty” workers has received little attention.

**Incivility and the Workplace**

Anderson and Pearson (1999) define workplace incivility as “low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others (p.457)”. Unlike other antisocial work behavior, such as bullying (Rayner, 1997), interpersonal aggression (Glomb & Liao, 2003), or psychological aggression (Baron & Neuman, 1996), acts of incivility, such as silent treatment or violation of norms, are readily overlooked by the organizations due to their ambiguous intents and low intensity (Lim et al., 2008). More recently, however, scholars have devoted considerable research attention to incivility as a crucial factor in work quality and health outcomes for employees (Griffin & Lopez, 2005). Workplace incivility has been shown to have negative effects on job satisfaction, job withdrawal, and career salience (Cortina et al., 2001). Not only does workplace incivility impact work-related outcomes, but it also has been associated with greater psychological and physical distress (Cortina et al., 2001). There is a burgeoning body of research on workplace incivility across cultures (Shilpzand, De Pater and Frez, 2016). Few studies have examined workplace mistreatment in South Korea (Kim & Shapiro, 2008; Kim, Shapiro, Aquino, Lim & Bennett, 2008). These studies focused on managers or graduate students and did not explore the experiences of workplace incivility of working class workers like janitors. In addition, very few studies, have examined how workplace incivility shapes critical work-related outcomes such as intention to quit, and depression. It seems reasonable that incivility in workplace could shape employees’ desire to quit their jobs and negatively affect their psychological well-being. However, it is not clear whether incivility in the workplace is a meaningful third variable that explains the relationship between workplace predictors (e.g., job burnout, work-home conflict) and outcome variables (e.g., intention to quit, depression). In the current study, we explored this question.

**Job Burnout and Intention to Quit**

Burnout is a metaphoric expression of a state of mental weariness, and job burnout focuses on situations in which the source of such distress is from work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Job burnout was originally considered to occur exclusively in the human services (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). However, both researchers and organizations have discovered job burnout exists outside of those who do “people work”. As a result, the original version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) was adapted to measure job burnout in occupations that are not in the human services; this updated version is called the MBI - General Survey (MBI-GS: Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996). Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI; Bakker et al., 2000) is also generally accepted by the field (Schaufeli & Taris, 2005) and included physical and cognitive aspects of job burnout (Demerouti & Bakker, 2008).

Job burnout is an important psychological construct, especially for those who do “dirty” work. There are three dimensions to job burnout and they all seem more related to “dirty workers” than to those in other vocations. The first dimension is *exhaustion*: measuring fatigue at work. Most dirty work occupations involve highly physical labor compared to other jobs. The second is *cynicism*: reflecting indifference or a distant attitude toward work in general. A host of evidence from the “dirty work” literature shows that “dirty” workers are exposed to situations where they have a difficult time finding positive meaning in their work (Hughes, 1971; Ashforth et al., 2007, Simpson et al., 2014). The last dimension is *professional efficacy*, which denotes both social and non-social aspects of occupational accomplishments. Due to the lack of respect for their jobs and the absence of any systems to reinforce their hard work, people who do “dirty work” find it challenging to achieve a sense of accomplishment at work. Despite the distinctive relationship between job burnout and “dirty work”, however, there has been little research exploring this relationship.

One important consequence of job burnout is that it leads workers to quit their jobs. In fact, job burnout affects various forms of job withdrawal, including the intention to leave the job and actual turnover (Maslach et al., 2001). Knowing how and why people form the intention to quit their jobs is important not only for workers. It is as essential for managers who should address the high costs involved in the hiring and training of new employee (Firth et al., 2004). Nevertheless, further evidence is still needed to explain how job burnout affects the intention to quit work, in order to improve organizational practices.

**Work-Family Conflict and Depression**

Having responsibilities both at work and home is stressful, particularly for women. (Sabbath et al., 2015). This pressure is intensified for women of low-socioeconomic status, who are more pressured to earn money. Research has shown that work-family conflict (WFC) is different between blue- and white-collar workers (Front et al., 1992). This variance of WFC between classes has been observed (Front, Russell, and Copper, 1992), but research has not yet fully explored the implications of WFC for working class janitors.

Research has shown that workplace incivility can harm the target’s family domain (Lim & Lee, 2011). Moreover, studies have indicated that incivility breeds negative psychological health outcomes, such as depression (Cortina et al., 2001). However, no work has considered whether contextual (gender, class) work-related stress can make employees perceive greater incivility, which in turn could result in a host of negative outcomes. We hypothesize that the severe work-family conflict among “dirty workers” in Korea will positively correlate with perception of incivility, which may positively relate to depressive symptoms. Employees who experience more WFC might perceive more workplace incivility, leading to more depressive symptoms.

Our hypothesis is in line with the previous research by Edwards & Rothbard, which suggests that work and family experiences will be positively related to work incivility (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Rothbard & Dumas, 2006). Specifically, spillover involves the transference of experiences between family and work such that one domain impacts the other. Several researchers suggest that the perception and impact of incivility at work shape and are shaped by tensions at home where the experience of incivility is not limited to the work domain, but “spills over” into the family domain (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Rothbard & Dumas, 2006; Ferguson, 2012). This research theorizes that the chronic stress stemming from coworker incivility impacts the work and family of the employees. The cyclical nature of this dynamics where employees who experience incivility at work may bring home the stress, negative emotion, and perceived ostracism that result from those experiences, which in turn affects their family life and heightens their perception of incivility at work.

Among negative outcomes of WFC, depression is a significant psychological problem affecting both work and family. In one study, depression severity, psychiatric comorbidity, and psychomotor retardation best predicted continued work absenteeism (Tollesfson et al., 1993). Also, workers with depression reported significantly more total health-related lost productive time than those without depression (mean, 5.6 hours/week vs an expected 1.5 hours/week, respectively). However, we are aware of no work on the relationship between WFC, workplace incivility, and depressive symptoms. We hypothesize that when the target carries stress created through conflict between work and home, the target perceives more incivility experiences, which results in reporting more depressive symptoms inside and outside of work.

**Hypotheses**

Based on our understanding of job burnout and incivility in the workplace as crucial factors in intention to quit, we predicted that both job burnout and incivility would be positively correlated (H1). Second, we predicted the incivility would mediate the relationship between job burnout and intention to quit (H2). Third, we hypothesized that Work Family Conflict (WFC) and depression would be positively correlated (H3). Lastly, we predicted that workplace incivility would mediate the relationship between WFC and depressive symptoms (H4).

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were 160 (116 female, 29 male, 15 unidentified) university janitors from 4 co-educational universities and one women’s university in the Seoul area. Their ages ranged from 34 to 77 (*M* = 59.00, *SD* = 6.99) and all were employed full time; 88 did not graduate from high school (29 graduated from high school and 1 person graduated from college), and 130 of them were married or partnered (6 single, 24 divorced, separated, or widowed).

**Procedure**

Data were collected by means of pencil-and-paper surveys. Participants from all universities were told that the survey was to understand how they thought of their work and whether they were doing well. For participants who were not literate, the principal investigator or research assistants read each scale one by one. Each scale that was used for this research was translated into Korean and back translated into English for accuracy. All participants received 10000 wons (10 dollars) as compensation. All the scales we used are listed below, and means and standard deviations are included in Table 1.

*Incivility.*

Participants were first asked to complete scales to measure their perception of incivility in the workplace (12 items, Cortina, 2001). Sample items include: “People paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinions” and “People doubted your judgment on a matter over which you had responsibility”. This scale measured the frequency of participants’ experiences of disrespectful, rude, or condescending behaviors from superiors or coworkers within the previous 5 years, and the greater values imply more severe experience of incivility. Participants responded on a 5-point scale (0 = *Never* to 4 = *Many times*). Internal reliability was high (Cronbach α = .88).

*Burnout*

The Oldenberg Burnout Inventory (12 items; OLBI; Bakker et al., 2000) was used to assess the degree of burnout at work. Sample items include: “More and more often I talk about my work in a negative way” and “Lately, I tend to think less during my work and just execute it mechanically”. Participants indicated how much they agree with these statements, using a 7-point Likert-like scale (1 = *Strongly disagree* and 7 = *Strongly agree*). Internal reliability was high (Cronbach α = .81).

*Depression*

The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (20 items; CES-D; Radloff, 1977) was used to assess depressive symptoms. Sample items include: “I was bothered by things that usually do not bother me” and “I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor”. Participants indicated how often they had specific feelings or engaged in certain behaviors over the past week, using a 5-point Likert scale (1= *Never* and 5 = A*ll of the time*). Internal reliability was high (Cronbach α = .80).

*Intention to Quit*

The Turnover Intentions Scale (7 items; TIS; Porter et al., 1976) was used to measure participants’ intention to quit their current job. Sample items include: “I often think about quitting my job” and “I will probably look for a new job during the next year”. Participants indicated how much they agree with these statements, using a 7-point Likert-like scale (1 = S*trongly Disagree* and 7 = *Strongly Agree*). Internal reliability reached an acceptable range (Cronbach α = .61).

*Work-Family Conflict*

The Work-Family Conflict scale (10 items; WFC; Netemeyer et al., 1996) was used to measures participants’ perception of conflict between work and family. Sample items include: “I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home” and “Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my career puts on me”. Participants indicated how much they agree with these statements, using a 7-point Likert-like scale (1 = S*trongly Disagree* and 7 = *Strongly Agree*). Internal reliability was high (Cronbach α = .85).

**Plan of Analysis**

We ran a series of simple mediation analyses using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2014) for SPSS. Mediation is a statistical method of analysis, used to understand the mechanism that underlies a relationship between a predictor and outcome variable by a third, mediating variable. With this method of analysis, the mediator is used to clarify the relationship between the predictor and outcome variable.

We used bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals (BCa CI) calculated on 1,000 samples to assess significance of the indirect effect. While the Sobel test is frequently used to determine significance in mediation analyses, Field (2014) suggests using BCa CI, because Sobel results can often be unstable for small sample sizes. With this method, if the confidence interval does not contain zero we can assume that all values within the interval are plausible values and thus the effect is significant. Three types of effects for mediational analyses are reported in PROCESS: indirect, direct, and total. The indirect effect represents the effect of the predictor on the outcome through a third “mediating” variable, while the direct effect represents the effect of the predictor on the outcome independent of the indirect effect. The total effect represents the sum of both the direct and indirect effect.

**Results**

**Preliminary Analysis**

The results of bivariate correlations are reported in Table 1. As can be seen, job burnout is positively related with turnover intention and incivility, suggesting that employees who are burnt out tend to perceive more incivility and want to quit their jobs. Also, WFC is positively related with depression and incivility, suggesting that employees experiencing high WFC tend to perceive more incivility at work and report more depressive symptoms. For our subsequent analyses we included gender, age, and education variables as control variables.

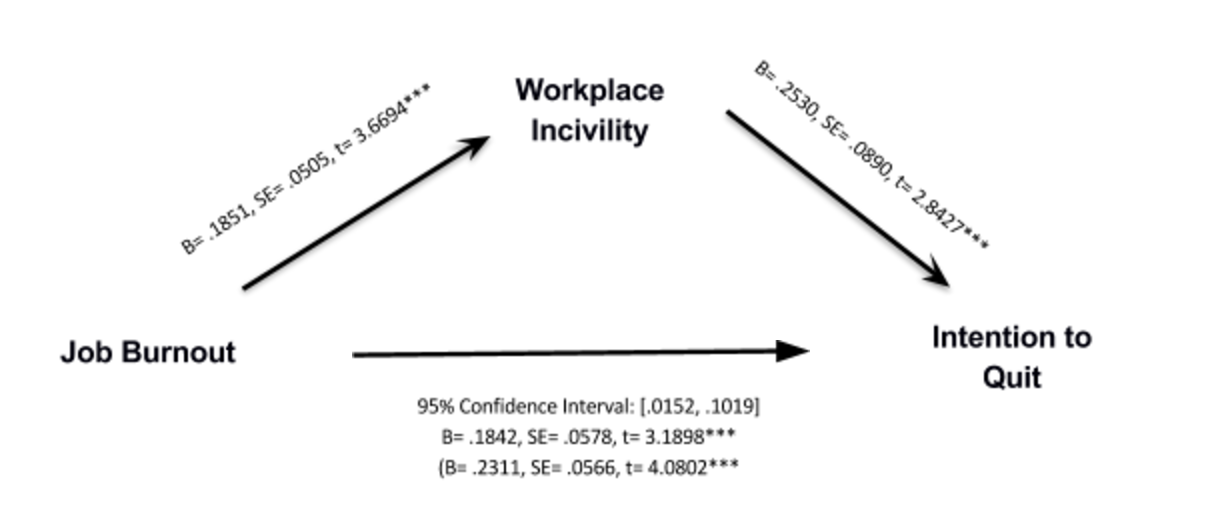
Table 1: *Correlations between Demographics, Predictor, Outcome, and Proposed Mediator Variables*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 1. Age | 59 | 6.99 | \_ |  | -.29\*\* | -.04 | -.09 | .38 | -.07 | -.09 |
| 2. Gender |  |  |  | \_ | -.14 | .06 | .04 | .00 | .06 | .01 |
| 3. Education |  |  |  |  | \_ | -.02 | .02 | -.150 | -.048 | .02 |
| 4. Depression | 1.94 | .45 |  |  |  | \_ | .36\*\* | .43\*\* | .27\*\* | .27\*\* |
| 5. Job burnout | 3.46 | 1.03 |  |  |  |  | \_ | .3\*\* | .25\*\* | .36\*\* |
| 6. Work-family conflict | 2.23 | .85 |  |  |  |  |  | \_ | .58\*\* | .23\*\* |
| 7. Intention to quit | 2.4 | .76 |  |  |  |  |  |  | \_ | .30\*\* |
| 8. Incivility | 1.62 | .67 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \_ |

\*\*p ≤ .01.

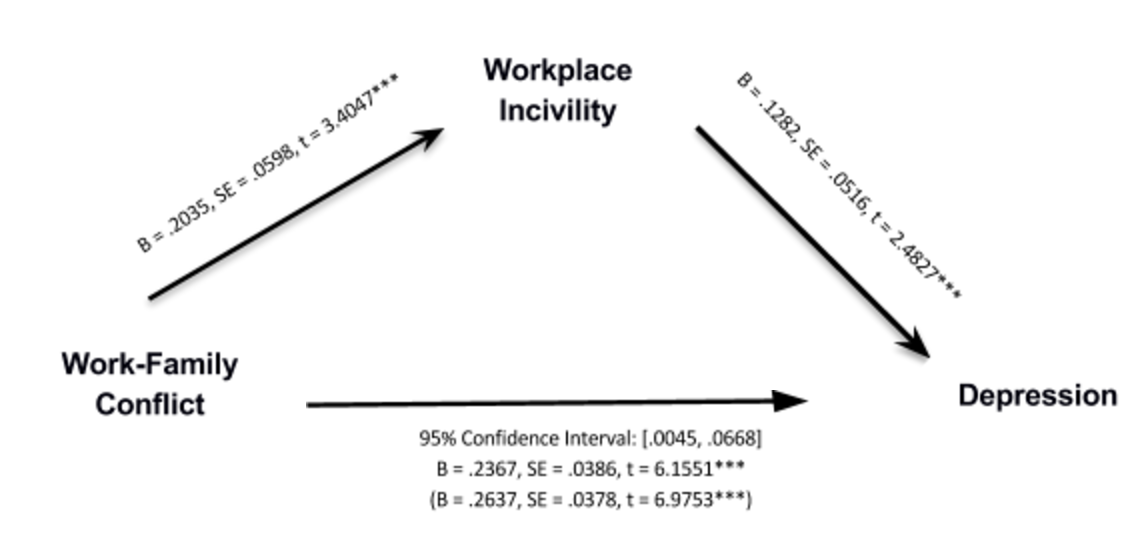
**Incivility Mediating Job Burnout and Intention to Quit**

Figure 1 shows the unstandardized coefficients for the specific paths in this model. As the figure shows, job burnout is positively related to incivility, supporting H1 (b = .1851, *p* <.001). H2 is also supported, given that there was a significant indirect effect of job burnout on the intention to quit through perceived incivility in the workplace, ab = .05, BCa CI [0.02, 0.1]. The mediator could account for 20 percent of total effect, P = .20.

*Figure* 1. Results of mediation analyses examining the role of workplace incivility in mediating the relationship between job burnout and intention to quit. *\*\*p ≤ .01. \*\*\*p ≤ .001*.

**Incivility Mediating Work-home Conflict and Depression**

Our hypotheses regarding WFC and depression is represented in Figure 2. As predicted, there is a positive relationship between WFC and depression, b = .2367, *p* < .001, confirming H3. H4 was also supported by the finding of a significant indirect effect of work-home conflict on the level of depression through perceived incivility in the workplace, ab = .02, BCa CI [0.004, 0.6]. The mediator could account for 10 percent of total effect, P = .10.



*Figure 2*. Results of mediation analyses examining the role of workplace incivility in mediating the relationship between work-family conflict and depression. \*\* *p* < .01, \*\*\* *p* < .001.

**Study 2**

To grasp context-specific incivility, we used an open-ended question prompt in addition to the closed-ended survey format to observe culture and class-specific incivility in the workplace. We especially expected to find the perception of “mushi” from their response. Mushi is a form of incivility that is specific to the South-Korean context. The direct translation of mushi is “ignoring”, but this form of incivility can be found and unfold in various verbal and nonverbal ways. “Mushi” is the outcome of disrespect and can be perceived from hostile stares, speaking down to you, or any forms of unfair treatment. Every aspect of incivility and lack of respect can be translated and regarded as “mushi” in South Korea. Majority of the motivations of recent hate crimes was “mushi”. Perpetrators explained their action by perception of “mushi” either verbally or nonverbally (Park & Choi, 2013).

Gaining acceptance by others is highly cherished in the East Asian cultural context in general (Markus & Kitayama, 1994), but previous research has showed that Koreans are more prone to display their status and at the same time to “mushi” others (Lee, 2007). In comparison to other cultural groups, many high-status people in Korea tend to more “mushi” and disrespect others who are lower in class, but the low-status group in South Korea does not perceive this treatment as fair (Lee, 2006). Thus, we expected to find this reported by our participants, due to the negative societal attitude toward manual work.

**Method**

Participants were asked to answer an open-ended question “What are the three worst things about being a custodian?” after the presentation of the scaled items used in Study 1. From their answers, we counted those mentioning perception of incivility, including both the aspect of incivility covered by the incivility scale (Cortina, 2001) and culture-specific incivilities such as “mushi”. “Mushi” was coded by the primary investigator only when participants’ specifically mentioned the word “mushi”

**Results**

*Perception of Incivility*

The perception of incivility was mentioned a total of 72 times, and of the 160 participants, 52 participants (32.5%) mentioned at least one kind of incivility. The most frequent answer was “mushi” from coworkers, students, and supervisors (19 times). Other examples included the lack of acknowledgement (3 times); insulting remarks from supervisors (8 times); and stigma toward their work (6 times). Responses not relevant to the perception of incivility were: the low wages; labor-intensive summer cleaning during the break; early commute time; participating in demonstrations; and physical pain.

**Discussion**

We hypothesized that job burnout and incivility would be positively correlated (H1) and that incivility would mediate the relationship between job burnout and intention to quit one’s job (H2). We also predicted that WFC and depression would be positively correlated (H3) and that workplace incivility would mediate the relationship between WFC and depression (H4). The findings of our research support all four of these hypotheses.

The current research makes a unique contribution to the “dirty work” and incivility literature. First, research on incivility so far has not looked at people doing “dirty work”. With this study, we not only expand the generalizability of the impact of workplace incivility, but also analyze context-dependent aspects of incivility experienced by janitors. Also, the results of this study show that workplace incivility can be an important mediating variable. The bulk of studies prior to this one have demonstrated that workplace incivility is a strong predictor variable for a host of negative outcomes (Penney & Spector, 2005; Lim et al., 2008; Cortina et al., 2001), but none have looked deeper into the relationship of incivility, job burnout, intention to quit, WFC, and depression, as we have begun to do.

Additionally, this is the first study to examine incivility among Korean blue collar workers. The specific hierarchical cultural norms as well as the discrimination against both female and manual laborers suggest that workplace incivility would be a powerful force in the South Korean context. Our study offers some insights into how incivility is indeed a critical factor in shaping the work and family lives of South Korean janitors. Lastly, this research contributes to the growing body of research that signals the recent shift among scholars from an exclusive interest in blatant bullying and insults toward studies of more subtle incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina et al., 2001; Hershcovis, 2011). Considerable research focuses on blatant insults and bullying at workplace with little discussion so far on the impact of subtle uncivil behaviors.

We argue that understanding the consequences of incivility at work place is important for both employers and employees in Korea. We also have to keep in mind that our results were simultaneously influenced by gender, class, and culture, as suggested by intersectionality researchers. As Crenshaw (1995) -- a renowned intersectionality researcher -- argued, various social identities such as gender, class, and ethnicity simultaneously affect marginalized groups. Being older, female, and a janitor in Korea is not simply the sum of the effects of gender, class, age, and culture. Working as a female janitor in the U.S. and in South Korea would be qualitatively different experiences, in spite of their seemingly identical identities. Older Korean female janitors are situated in layers of social identities, where they get little credit for the work they do inside and outside their home. As women in South Korea, they are expected to take care of household chores with little appreciation, despite long-hours of physical labor at work. They are also a “sandwich generation” in Korea, responsible for taking care of frail elderly parents and adult children (Shin et al., 2015). Thus, WFC may be particularly intense for these workers, potentially amplifying the effects of workplace incivility. It is important to know these workers’ social location and multidimensional identities to accurately understand their unique psychological experience.

Our results showing that WFC affects the perception of workplace incivility and depressive symptoms have implications for how we should think about the well-being of female workers inside and outside of the workplace. This result invites us to reason how seemingly unrelated stress from home can affect the perception of hostility at the workplace. Depression in female workers results in a negative cycle at home as well as in the workplace. We should be mindful of the fact that both the workplace and the family environment interact. Thus, workplace, family, social policies, and cultures need to be engaged to prevent and decrease WFC.

Our study also calls for the need to use mixed methods to study incivility in workplace. Mahalingam and Rabelo (2018) argue for the need to embrace a *radical empiricist* approach proposed by William James in order to capture the lived experiences of incivility to fully explore the phenomenology of incivility especially the situated and culturally grounded aspects of incivility. Radical empirical approach calls for an integration of quantitative and phenomenological approaches to understand fully the experiential and embodied nature of lived experiences of human beings. We need to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to study incivility. Our mixed methods approach captures the universal as well as culture specific aspects of incivility. For example, a few of our participants mentioned that they anticipate mistreatment (anticipated incivility, another variant of mushi) if they reveal their profession outside their workplace because of the low status associated with incivility. Future research on incivility needs to combine quantitative and qualitative interviews to explore how intersections of culture, class and gender shape incivility at workplace. Our study suggests to incorporate more cultures-specific forms of incivility that are salient to the norms of a specific cultures. For example, in Japan pregnant women experience incivility in workplace which is known as *matahara* (Macnaughtan, 2015). Women have reported that stress due to matahara can at times lead to miscarriages. Similar to Japan, it was reported that some nurses in South Korea were forced to take turns to get married or get pregnant, leading to a 13.9% turnover rate (Kang, 2018). According to the Korea Nurses Association (KNA), it has been recognized that nurses who cannot adapt to this cultural norms decide to quit when they are pregnant. We argue that it is crucial to incorporate a radical empiricist approach to incorporate the phenomenological aspects of experiencing incivility at the intersections of class, gender and culture.

Even though the present study is significant for both the workplace incivility literature and the “dirty work” literature, there are some limitations to our study. First, our study provides correlational data, which limits our ability to make causal inferences from our results. Second, while our quantitative study finds meaningful interactions among workplace incivility and other home life and work variables, it points to the need for qualitative research to further explain in a more nuanced way the effects of workplace incivility as a mediator between job burnout and intention to leave as well as between work-family conflict and depression. Lastly, each job that is deemed “dirty” is positioned in a unique context (region, structure of work, culture, and gender), and it is therefore difficult to generalize this data to other occupations that are considered “dirty.” These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of our study. Further studies focused on “dirty work” in a variety of cultural settings need to be undertaken to increase our understanding of the effects of workplace incivility.

**Conclusions**

In conclusion, the results of the present study showed that workplace incivility is indeed a potent phenomenon among South Korean janitors. Also, our findings show that workplace incivility mediates the relationship between the job burnout and intention to quit as well as the relationship between the work-home conflict and depressive symptoms.

Our study provides support for the janitor at Chosun University who identified “the bare minimum working condition” as “being treated as a human being”. The kind of dehumanizing incivility that is endemic in the lives of South Korean janitors is shown to have compounding negative effects on both the spheres of work and home life. While precisely what the causal relationships are remains to be seen, the mediating effects of incivility on potential turnover and depression so far demonstrate and underscore the need and the value of treating these employees with greater respect and civility.

**Reference**

Allen, T. D., Herst, D. E., Bruck, C. S., & Sutton, M. (2000). Consequences associated with work-to-family conflict: a review and agenda for future research. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 5(2), 278. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1037/1076-8998.5.2.278>

Andersson, L. M., & Pearson, C. M. (1999). Tit for tat? The spiraling effect of incivility in the workplace. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(3), 452-471.

Ashforth, B. E., & Kreiner, G. E. (1999). “How can you do it?”: Dirty work and the challenge of constructing a positive identity. *Academy of management Review*, 24(3), 413-434. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/stable/259134 doi:10.5465/AMR.1999.2202129

Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., Clark, M. A., & Fugate, M. (2007). Normalizing dirty work: Managerial tactics for countering occupational taint. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1), 149-174. doi: 10.5465/AMJ.2007.24162092

Bacharach, S. B., Bamberger, P., & Conley, S. (1991). Work-home conflict among nurses and engineers: Mediating the impact of role stress on burnout and satisfaction at work. *Journal of organizational Behavior*, 12(1), 39-53. doi: 10.1002/job.4030120104

Beale, D., Lawrence, C., Smewing, C., & Cox, T. (1999). Organisational and environmental measures for reducing and managing work related violence. Leather, P., C. Brady, C. Lawrence,

D. Beale et T. Cox (éditeurs), Work-related Violence: Assessment and intervention, Londres/New York, Routledge, 87-105.

Chiappetta-Swanson, C. (2005). Dignity and dirty work: Nurses’ experiences in managing genetic termination for fetal anomaly. *Qualitative Sociology*, 28(1), 93-116. doi:10.1007/s11133-005-2632-0

Chin, H., Cho, H.K. and Baek, S.W. 2011. Working mothers and corporate policies, Seoul: Samsung Economic Research Institute.

Cho, J.M. and Kwon, T.H. 2010. Affirmative action and corporate compliance in South Korea. *Feminist economics*, 16(2): 111–139. doi:10.1080/13545701003731849

Cortina, L. M., Magley, V. J., Williams, J. H., & Langhout, R. D. (2001). Incivility in the workplace: incidence and impact. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 6(1), 64. doi: 10.1037/1076-8998.6.1.64

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Shaufeli, W. B. (2000). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499-512. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Shaufeli, W. B. (2000). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499-512. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499

Demerouti, E., Geurts, S. A., Bakker, A. B., & Euwema, M. (2004). The impact of shiftwork on work–home conflict, Job attitudes and health. *Ergonomics*, 47(9), 987-1002. doi:10.1080/00140130410001670408

Demerouti, E., & Bakker, A. B. (2008). The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory: A good alternative to measure burnout and engagement. *Handbook of stress and burnout in health care. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science*.

Einarsen, S., Aasland, M. S., & Skogstad, A. (2007). Destructive leadership behaviour: A definition and conceptual model. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18(3), 207-216. doi: 1048-9843, 1873-3409

Firth, L., Mellor, D. J., Moore, K. A., & Loquet, C. (2004). How can managers reduce employee intention to quit? *Journal of managerial psychology*, 19(2), 170-187. doi: 10.1108/02683940410526127

Griffin, R. W., O'Leary-Kelly, A., & Collins, J. (1998). Dysfunctional work behaviors in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* (1986-1998), 65.

Hershcovis, M. S. (2011). “Incivility, social undermining, bullying… oh my!”: A call to reconcile constructs within workplace aggression research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *32*(3), 499-519.

Hoel, H., Glasø, L., Hetland, J., Cooper, C. L., & Einarsen, S. (2010). Leadership styles as predictors of self‐reported and observed workplace bullying. *British Journal of Management*, 21(2), 453-468. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8551.2009.00664.x

Hong, Y., Kim, Y., & Son, H. (2016). Effect of nurses' incivility experienced by nursing student, coping on burnout in clinical practice. *Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing Administration*, 22(4), 323-331.

Kang, K. H. (2018), Why Are Nurses Leaving Hospitals? *Medical Treatment and Society*, (9), 19-32.

Kern, J. H., & Grandey, A. A. (2009). Customer incivility as a social stressor: The role of race and racial identity for service employees. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 14(1), 46-57.

Kernan, M. C., Watson, S., Fang Chen, F., & Gyu Kim, T. (2011). How cultural values affect the impact of abusive supervision on worker attitudes. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 18(4), 464-484.

Kim MH, Kim HJ (2007) An untold story in labor health: Korean women workers. New Solut 17: 325–343.doi:10.2190/NS.17.4.h

Kim, Y. (2010) Magnitude and Reality of precarious employment. Seoul: Korean Labour & Society Institute

Kim, D. (2004), Employment Relations and HRM in South Korea (Explorations in Asia Pacific Business Economics), Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot. doi: 10.1016/j.asieco.2006.08.005

Kim, T.-Y., & Shapiro, D. (2008). Revenge against supervisor mistreatment: Negative emotion, group membership, and cross-cultural differences. *International Journal of Conflict Management,* *19*, 339–358. https://doi.org/10.1108/10444060810909293

Kim, T. Y., Shapiro, D. L., Aquino, K., Lim, V. K., & Bennett, R. J. (2008). Workplace offense and victims' reactions: the effects of victim‐offender (dis) similarity, offense‐type, and cultural differences. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *29*(3), 415-433. doi: 10.1002/job.519

Kim, S. Y., Kim, J. K., & Park, K. O. (2013). Path analysis for workplace incivility, empowerment, burnout, and organizational commitment of hospital nurses. *Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing Administration*, 19(5), 555-564.

Koo, H. (2001). Korean workers: The culture and politics of class formation. Cornell University Press.doi:10.1086/504647

Lee, H. (2006), The Social Form of Conspicuousness and Recognition among Koreans, *Dam Laun*, 9 (2)

Lee, H. (2008), A Comparative Study of Social Conspicuousness among Korea, Germany and Japan, *Korean-German Sociological Society*, 18 (2)

Lim, S., Cortina, L. M., & Magley, V. J. (2008). Personal and workgroup incivility: impact on work and health outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(1), 95. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.95>

Lim, S., & Lee, A. (2011). Work and nonwork outcomes of workplace incivility: Does family support help? *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *16*(1), 95. doi: 10.1037/a0021726

Mahalingam, R., Rabelo, V. (2018). Teaching mindfulness to undergraduates: A survey and photovoice study. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 1-20. doi.org/10.1108/10444060810909293

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual review of psychology*, 52(1), 397-422. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397

Macnaughtan, H. (2015). Womenomics for Japan: is the Abe policy for gendered employment viable in an era of precarity? *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, *13*(12/1).

Milam, A. C., Spitzmueller, C., & Penney, L. M. (2009). Investigating individual differences among targets of workplace incivility. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, *14*(1), 58, doi: 10.1037/a0012683

Miller, D. A. (1981). The ‘sandwich’ generation: Adult children of the aging. *Social Work*, *26*(5), 419-423.

Otis, E. M. (2008). The dignity of working women service, sex, and the labor politics of localization in China's City of eternal spring. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(3), 356-376. doi: 10.1177/0002764208325309

Park, J. S., & Choi, N. B. (2013), The Characteristics and Types of Nonspecific Motive Crime, The Korean Journal of Forensic Psychology, 4(3), 107-124.

Patterson, L., & Walcutt, B. (2013). Korean workplace gender discrimination research analysis: a review of the literature from 1990 to 2010. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 19(1), 85-101. doi: 10.1080/13602381.2012.697774

Pearson, C. M., & Porath, C. L. (2005). On the nature, consequences and remedies of workplace incivility: No time for “nice”? Think again. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 19(1), 7-18. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/stable/4166149 doi: 0896-3789, 2167-2709

Pearson, C. M., Andersson, L. M., & Porath, C. L. (2005). Workplace Incivility. In S. Fox, P. E. Spector, S. Fox, P. E. Spector (Eds.), Counterproductive work behavior: Investigations of actors and targets (pp. 177-200). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association. doi: 10.1037/10893-008

Penney, L. M., & Spector, P. E. (2005). Job stress, incivility, and counterproductive work behavior (CWB): The moderating role of negative affectivity*. Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(7), 777-796. doi: 10.1002/job.336

Porter, L. W., Crampton, W. J., & Smith, L. J. (1976). Organizational commitment and managerial turnover: A longitudinal study. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 15(1), 87-99. doi:10.1016/0030-5073(76)90030-1

Radloff, L. S. (1977). The CES-D: A self-report depression scale for research in the general population*. Applied Psychological Measurements*, 1, 385-401. doi: 10.1177/014662167700100306

Remennick, L. I. (1999). Women of the “sandwich” generation and multiple roles: The case of Russian immigrants of the 1990s in Israel. *Sex Roles*, *40*(5-6), 347-378.

Rhee, S. Y., Hur, W. M., & Kim, M. (2017). The relationship of coworker incivility to job performance and the moderating role of self-efficacy and compassion at work: The job demands-resources (JD-R) approach. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 32(6), 711-726.

Sabbath, E. L., Mejía-Guevara, I., Noelke, C., & Berkman, L. F. (2015). The long-term mortality impact of combined job strain and family circumstances: A life course analysis of working American mothers. *Social Science & Medicine*, *146*, 111-119. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.10.024>

Schaufeli, W. B., & Taris, T. W. (2005). The conceptualization and measurement of burnout: Common ground and worlds apart. *Work & Stress*, 19(3), 256-262. doi:10.1080/02678370500385913

Schilpzand, P., De Pater, I. E., & Erez, A. (2016). Workplace incivility: A review of the literature and agenda for future research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *37*, S57-S68. doi: 10.1002/job.1976

Simon, M., Kümmerling, A., & Hasselhorn, H. M. (2004). Work-home conflict in the European nursing profession*. International journal of occupational and environmental health*, 10(4), 384-391. doi: 10.1179/oeh.2004.10.4.384

Simpson, A., Slutskaya, N., Hughes, J., & Simpson, R. (2014). The use of ethnography to explore meanings that refuse collectors attach to their work. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 9(3), 183-200.

Simpson, R., Hughes, J., Slutskaya, N., & Balta, M. (2014). Sacrifice and distinction in dirty work: men’s construction of meaning in the butcher trade. *Work, Employment & Society*, 28(5), 754-770. doi: 10.1177/0950017013510759

Slutskaya, N., Simpson, A., & Hughes, J. (2012). Lessons from photoelicitation: encouraging working men to speak. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 7(1), 16-33. doi: 10.1108/17465641211223447.

Spillover and crossover of incivility Copyright # 2011 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. J. *Organizational. Behavioral*. (2011) DOI: 10.1002/job 1989

Stewart, W. F., Ricci, J. A., Chee, E., Hahn, S. R., & Morganstein, D. (2003). Cost of lost productive work time among US workers with depression. Jama, 289(23), 3135-3144. doi: 10.1001/jama.290.18.2443

Tollefson, G. D., Souetre, E. J., Thomander, L., & Potvin, J. H. (1993). Comorbid anxious signs and symptoms in major depression: impact on functional work capacity and comparative treatment outcomes. *International clinical psychopharmacology*. 8(4), 281-293. doi: 10.1097/00004850-199300840-00013

Tomey, A. N. N. (2009). Nursing leadership and management effects work environments. *Journal of nursing management*, 17(1), 15-2. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2007.03.002 doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2834.2008.00963.x